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18 June 1986

OCA 86-4029

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Terrorist Threat in Beirut
 NIO Briefing of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee
 Senate Appropriations Committee, 16 June 1986

1. The security situation in Beirut and especially the presence of radical groups at American University-Beirut (AUB) were described by Charles Allen, NIO for Counter-terrorism, in a briefing for the staff members of the Subcommittee for Foreign Operations, Senate Appropriations Committee. The briefing was requested as background for Subcommittee recommendations for continued U.S. financial support to AUB. Attending were Jim Bond, Richard Collins and Jane McGhee, Senate staff members. [redacted] a DI analyst assigned to NESA, also participated. The staff members were informed that the briefing was being given at the TS level.

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2. Mr. Allen reviewed the chaotic situation in Lebanon, especially in Beirut, and mentioned intelligence analysts' expectation that no significant change is likely to occur in the near future. The breakdown of civil order has evolved since 1975-76, with some 44 separate militias now competing in Lebanon. The city, however, has remained remarkably resilient and AUB, in the view of Mr. Allen, continues to function. The American University Hospital, in addition, continues to provide services to the civilian population. However, there is likely to be no stabilizing influence in Lebanon for two or three years, at least.

3. The Subcommittee staffers asked specifically about reports of anti-Americanism at AUB and other issues related to the university's viability. They were told that the radical Hizballah element on campus is strong and is working toward elimination of Western influence. Allegations that arms are kept at AUB are probably accurate. However, in the NIO's view, transferring the American institution to another location in the Middle East would be a major blow to morale in Lebanon and other Mideast countries. It would weaken the pro-West orientation of some Lebanese elements. On the issue of the Gemayel Government not meeting its commitment to support AUB financially (\$5.5 million indebtedness), the reason is that fighting and disorder have disrupted normal revenue collection from taxes and tariffs.

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4. The staffers indicated their interest in follow-up information on the security situation at AUB. The NIO stated that this could be provided, particularly intelligence which might indicate whether or not the university can continue to function as an academic institution.

5. The briefing took place from 1600 to 1645 hrs at the Subcommittee offices (S-125).

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